

Professional Formation

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Professional formation

The Institute for Learning (IfL) is the professional body for teachers, trainers, tutors and trainee teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘teachers’) in the further education and skills sector, with responsibility for the registration and regulation of licensed practitioners through Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) and Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status.

This licence will be conferred through a process of professional formation, defined in the 2007 Regulations as “the post-qualification process by which a teacher demonstrates through professional practice the ability to use effectively the skills and knowledge acquired whilst training to be a teacher and the capacity to meet the occupational standards required of a teacher”.



Background and context

Throughout initial teacher training, teachers are assessed against Lifelong Learning UK’s occupational standards. Professional formation allows teachers to describe how these standards are evidenced in their teaching practice, along with aspects of subject currency, teaching and learning, reflective practice and planning for continuing professional development.

Professional formation is not limited to time, other than the requirement to achieve QTLS or ATLS status within five years of employment in the sector. It is based on the teacher’s ability to meet the standards expected of a licensed practitioner. Some candidates could complete the process very soon after taking their teaching qualification, whilst others might take longer. This allows the process to take account of the diversity of employment within the sector and not disadvantage any candidates or employers.

The time taken to complete professional formation and achieve QTLS or ATLS status will be determined by the individual circumstances of the teacher, for example, length of experience, full-time, part-time, fractional or sessional role and in-service training. The Institute has therefore taken a flexible, pragmatic approach to professional formation.

The professional formation account

Candidates for QTLS or ATLS status will be expected to submit their professional formation account through the Institute's online personal learning space, REFLECT. A template will enable the candidate to add evidence from a variety of sources (scanned documents, video, peer reviews, audio, etc) to support the application. The Institute will provide exemplars of accounts and a dedicated support service to assist candidates.

The account comprises two forms of evidence:

1. **Mandatory elements** are drawn from typical sources and are common for all candidates and are determined through regulation or other requirements deemed by the sector to fit all teaching roles.
2. **Personalised elements** are individual reflections on professional elements and are determined by the Institute, incorporating evidence from a variety of sources appropriate to the candidate.



Mandatory elements

1. **Completion of an approved qualification** (or equivalent) at a level appropriate to QTLS (level 5) or ATLS (level 3 or 4) status: scanned certificates authenticated by the employer or direct notification from the awarding body.
2. **Numeracy and literacy skills** at or above level 2: scanned certificates authenticated by the employer, direct notification from the awarding body or other evidence such as numeracy or literacy skills within the teacher's subject area.
3. **Supporting testimony**, the endorsement of the completed application by a person deemed to satisfy the Institute's criteria for supporting claims for professional formation: a peer review of the complete application following the Institute's template for supporting testimonies.
4. **Declaration of suitability**, a self-declaration of fitness to practice made against the Institute's criteria set out in the Declaration of Suitability Statement: a completed declaration of suitability statement.

Personalised elements

1. **Subject currency** – an account of the candidate's expertise in their subject area: could include, or be a mix of, a personal reflection on subject related skills or expertise, peer observation from a suitable expert witness, scanned copies of authenticated qualifications in the subject area, etc.
2. **Teaching and learning** – an account of the candidate's ability to use effectively the skills and knowledge acquired through ITT to deliver their subject to a range of learners: could include, or be a mix of, a personal reflection on teaching and learning, peer or learner observation from a suitable expert witness, observation of teaching and learning, micro teaching, etc.
3. **Self evaluation** – an individual analysis of the candidate's learning needs and goals for the next 12 months: could include, or be a mix of, a personal reflection on teaching practice using REfLECT (or other reflective method), evidence of needs analysis coming from appraisal or review, etc.
4. **Professional development planning** – an individualised learning plan detailing the actions the candidate will take to address the needs and goals identified through self assessment: could include, or be a mix of, a professional development plan within REfLECT (or other Continuing Professional Development (CPD) planning and recording method), a scanned professional development plan, reference to the candidate's reflective journal or professional development log, etc.
5. **Reflective practice** – reflection on the impact of professional development on the candidate's teaching practice, the benefit to learners and wider communities of practice: could include, or be a mix of, a personal reflection on the impact of CPD, peer review, learner observations, observation of teaching and learning, collaborative working, etc.

Quality assurance

The Code of Professional Practice and requirement to remain in good standing through CPD safeguards the future behaviour and practice of those awarded professional status. All new entrant teachers achieving QTLS or ATLS status are subject to their professional development being sampled within the first five years of their teaching careers. The Institute recommends that all new teachers should be subject to the observation of teaching and learning as a part of the employer's self-assessment cycle within 24 months of the award of QTLS or ATLS status.

For more information on professional formation, the Code of Professional Practice and CPD, visit www.ifl.ac.uk or phone 0844 815 3202.